Press release

Shortlist for new supercomputer

19 December 2001

Three companies have been shortlisted to provide the Met Office with its new supercomputer.

The Met Office relies on the use of supercomputing (high-performance) facilities to predict the weather and climate change. In order to do this it needs to ensure its systems stay in line with scientific and technical developments. It now uses two Cray T3E parallel computers.

In 2000 a project was set up to ensure that the Met Office maintained the capability it needs, and it identified a need for upgrades in 2003 and 2006, when the organisation has moved from its current headquarters to purpose-built offices in Exeter.

Nine companies were invited to respond to the Met Office's operational requirements and three have now been shortlisted, following technical evaluation co-ordinated by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). They are Cray UK Limited, NEC (UK) Ltd and Silicon Graphics (SGI).

Alan Douglas, Head of IT Services, said: "The upgrade will allow us to use higher-resolution models with improved computational and physical processing, enabling us to get more-accurate forecasts of both near, current weather and longer-term climate trends."

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